1	2	3	4
(ii) Singareni Collieris Co. Ltd. (SCCL)	Andhra Pradesh	66	24.00
) Indian Iron & Steel Company (IISCO)	Bihar	2	
	West Bengal	1	
(iv) Damodar Valley Corporation (OVC)	Bihar	1	5.00
Private Sector (v) Tata Iron & Steel Company (IISCO)	Bihar	8	
	Total	527	249.00

National convention of consumer organisations

*252. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH :

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to reinforce the consumer movement and to take the movement to rural and backward areas in association with the voluntary consumer organisations;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether Government have organised or propose to organise a national convention of consumer organisations to provide more teeth to the Consumer Grievances Redressal Forum;

(d) if so, what are the details of the proposal and what will be the objectives and functions of the Forum; and

(e) what will be the composition of the Forum and how the members of the Forum would be appointed ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government accords high priority to promoting a strong and broad based consumer movement in the country, particularly in the rural and backward areas with the help of voluntary consumer organisations. Government encourages formation of such organisations in the rural and backward areas. Government has a scheme to give financial assistance to consumer organisations where

preference is given to those working in such areas. Similarly, under the scheme of National Awards for consumer protection, preference is given to those organisations which are working in rural and backward areas.

(c) to (e) Recently a National Convention on Consumer Protection was convened on 9-12-1993 where among other subjects, matters relating to "structural/organisational changes required in the redressal machinery to make it more effective" were also discussed. Some suggesions such as restricting the role of lawyers, providing sufficient staff and infrastructure to these forums etc. were made. The main objective and function of the redressal agencies is to provide simple and speedy redressal to consumer grievances in the field of defective goods, deficient services, unfair trade practices, restrictive trade practices etc.

The District Forum consists of three members including a person who is, or has been or is qualified to be a district judge to be appointed as its President. Two other members are the persons having adequate knowledge or experience and capability in dealing with problems relating to economics, law, commerce etc. One of these two members is a woman.

Recently the Act has been amended to provide for selection committee to appoint members in such forum.

Rural Population in the Country

@*256. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR : Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state :

(a) what is the total number of rural population in the country as per the latest census, state-wise;

(b) what is the percentage of national income being spent on rural development schemes, state-wise, particularly for Gujarat State; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Govt. to increase expenditure on rural development in the North-Western region of the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO) : (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. (*See* below)

(c) Allocations for major rural development schemes viz., Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), Accelerated Rural Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), and Desert Development Programme (DDP) for 1993-94 in respect of North-Western States have considerably enhanced as compared to those during the previous year. In addition to these programmes, a new scheme known as 'Employment Assurance Scheme' (EAS) was launched on 2-10-93 in 1752 identified backward blocks of the country in which Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) is currently in operation. Of the 1752 blocks, 97 blocks are in Gujarat, 114 in Maharashtra and 122 in Rajasthan.

@Previously Starred Question 216, transferred from 16th December, 1993.